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Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics, in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-second session.[1] The Commission may wish to review the work programme of the Working Group.

* E/CN.3/2002/1.
[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 4* (E/2001/24), chap. I, sect. A.

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Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

1. A brief note on the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics was presented to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-second session, held in New York from 29 February to 3 March 2000.

2. Since then, the work on the revision of the manuals on consumer price indices (CPI) and producer price indices (PPI) has advanced and most of the chapters have been drafted.

3. The technical expert group on the consumer price index met in Washington, D.C., on 5 and 6 February 2001, and at Geneva on 25 and 26 June 2001 and on 31 October 2001. The purpose of these meetings was to go through the draft chapters of the new CPI manual, provide authors with comments, and agree on the future timetable and action plan. The structure of the manual was also discussed and it was decided to split it into two parts, a theoretical part and a practical part, with a strong link established between them.

4. The Ottawa Group on Price Indices held a special session on the revision of the International Labour Organization CPI manual during its meeting held at Canberra, in April 2001. The Group endorsed the decision of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics to split the manual into conceptual and practical parts.

5. The structure and draft chapters of the revised CPI manual were reviewed by the International Workshop on Consumer Price Indices, held in Singapore from 4 to 8 June 2001. It was recommended that more examples be included in part II of the manual. This recommendation was taken into account by the technical expert group at its meeting in June 2001, and a group of developing countries and countries with economies in transition was invited to participate more actively in the revision process, provide comments on the usefulness of the draft chapters and provide ready-made numerical examples that would be appropriate for the manual.

6. The technical expert group on the producer price indices met informally during the meeting of the Ottawa Group at Canberra, on 4 April 2001. Another meeting was held at Geneva, on 29 and 30 October 2001. The group reviewed eight additional draft chapters and discussed methods to obtain additional user input and to develop publication strategies. The structure of the PPI manual was reviewed to allow maximum consistency with the structure of the CPI manual.

7. The next meetings of the two expert groups are provisionally scheduled to be held in the second half of March 2002. It is anticipated that the final versions of the manuals will be available in the northern hemisphere spring and summer of 2002.